

6 Tips to Bring Dignity & Solutions Journalism to your

→ Immigration Reporting

The Solutions Journalism Network webinar “[Covering Immigration Through a Solutions Lens](#)” explored how journalists can tell immigration stories with depth and nuance — focusing on problems AND how people, organizations and institutions are responding to them. The discussion featured:

- Hugo Balta, executive editor at the [Fulcrum](#) and publisher of the [Latino News Network](#);
- Dianna Nájuez, executive editor and co-founder of [Arizona Luminaria](#);
- Shondiin Silversmith, Indigenous affairs reporter at [Arizona Mirror](#).
- Jaisal Noor, moderator, democracy cohort manager at [Solutions Journalism Network](#)

Of the many tips the panelists offered, there were six key takeaways that journalists can use to deepen their immigration reporting with a solutions journalism lens:

ONE

SHIFT THE
NARRATIVE:
FOCUS ON
RESPONSES,
NOT JUST PROBLEMS



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“Immigration coverage often centers on crises, but solutions journalism widens the lens to cover how individuals and communities respond to these challenges. **It’s about telling the whole story — not just the struggle, but the dignity, resilience and agency in how people navigate these systems.**”

“If you walk in and you tell a story about farm workers, you often see stories that say, ‘These poor people who are just here, maybe on an HB visa or are undocumented, working in 110-degree weather sometimes picking crops.’ And yes, those things are true — workers’ rights, violations of workers’ rights — those things are true, and they should be in a solutions story. But you cannot have a truthful story if you don’t show the dignity of the people and how they’re working outside of systems that don’t support them, maybe are racist, and certainly are inequitable. You have to show how their voices are being heard, how they’re working together. And I think, for me, that’s the core of solutions journalism.”

— Dianna Nájuez



TWO

CHANGE YOUR
MINDSET,
NOT JUST
YOUR STORY
FRAMING



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“The four pillars of solutions journalism (response, insight, evidence, limitations) aren’t just a checklist for writing — they’re a framework for how you pitch, research and report. Adopt them early in your process to change how you think as a journalist.

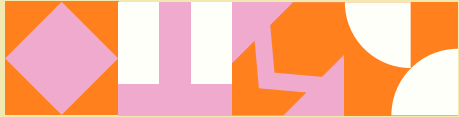
“For me, it’s about not just applying the four pillars when I sit down to write — it’s about changing how I think and organize my work from the very beginning. It changes how I pitch, how I research, how I frame stories. It also helps change the culture in newsrooms, because if we’re using the four pillars in the process of producing stories, we’re starting to think more critically about the responses to challenges — not just spotlighting problems, but asking what’s being done and how well it’s working.”

— Hugo Balta



THREE

BREAKING
NEWS CAN BE
IMPORTANT,
BUT IT'S
JUST THE
START

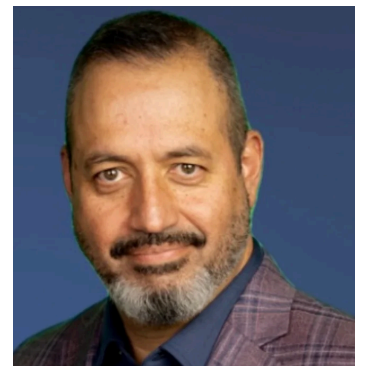


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“Use breaking news as an entry point for deeper, longer-term solutions reporting. **Start with the daily story, then stay connected to the community and follow up.** Look for systemic causes and responses that unfold over time.

“Spot news shouldn’t be the end of the story. Too often, something big happens, we race to cover it, and then it’s forgotten the next day. But the story doesn’t end there — especially on immigration. Those same communities are still living with the aftermath, and the systemic issues didn’t disappear. Go back. Add layers. Build relationships. Immigration isn’t just the crisis of the day — it’s ongoing. Solutions journalism allows you to go deeper, to follow up and explore how people are responding.”

— Hugo Balta



FOUR

BUILD TRUST
BY BRINGING
THE COMMUNITY
INTO THE
NEWSROOM



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“If your newsroom lacks understanding of immigrant communities, invite them in. Host panels or listening sessions where community members can speak directly and openly to editors and reporters. This builds trust and shifts perspectives.

“One of the best tools that we had was inviting the very communities in — usually four to six people from these actual communities. **We did this with Dreamers; we did it with undocumented [people] ... I can't tell you the change that I've seen.** You could be telling an editor, asking an editor, and bringing the idea — but as soon as they heard from the people in their community, it was like this light would flash.”

— Dianna Nájuez



FIVE

CHALLENGE
YOUR BIASES
— ESPECIALLY
AROUND
FRAMING



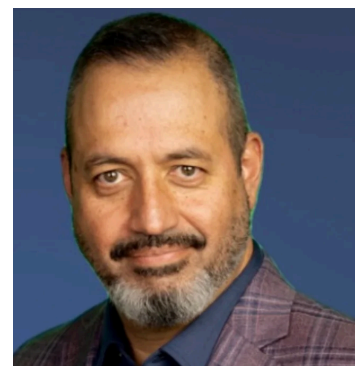
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“Communities might not see themselves as ‘having problems’ — they see themselves as realizing opportunities. Solutions journalism can challenge your assumptions about what’s considered a problem or a success.

“A lot of times, we as journalists see a problem and go looking for a solution, but **the people living in these communities — they’re not always framing it as a problem. They’re lifting each other up, realizing opportunities.** Solutions journalism forces me to confront my own biases and assumptions about what needs ‘fixing.’ It helps me produce stories that are authentic, because it makes me listen more deeply to how communities see themselves.”

— Hugo Balta



SIX

CONNECT
BREAKING
NEWS TO
LONG-TERM
IMPACTS



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“Policies and crises create lasting ripple effects. **Beyond immediate coverage, follow how these issues evolve over time — especially how communities respond and adapt. Solutions journalism is about documenting that journey.**”

“Breaking news is the immediate story, but it always has longer impacts — policies and events ripple out into communities over time. When I covered increased ICE raids, it wasn’t just about the event — it was about how it affected families, how it reached Indigenous communities who’d never dealt with immigration enforcement before. Solutions journalism gives us the framework to connect those dots, to show how people are responding, adapting, surviving.”

— Shondiin Silversmith

